

San Diego DX Club Bulletin



January 2013

DX Is!!

The San Diego DX Club (SDDXC) is among the best known and most highly respected DX clubs in the United States. Since it's founding in 1946, SDDXC members have been on both sides of the pile-ups with DXpeditions and a fair share have achieved "Top of the Honor Roll" status. If you're interested in chasing DX, contesting, exchanging stories or just rubbing elbows with fellow "Big Guns" or "Little Pistols", you'll feel

For real time DX spotting and lively conversation on a variety of subjects, join us on
144.415 MHz.

PROGRAM: SWAINS ISLAND DXPEDITION

Arnold I. Shatz, N6HC

MEETING NOTICE:

JOIN US AT THE SIZZLER

AERO DRIVE & MURPHY CANYON RD

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2013

SOCIAL HOUR, 5:00 P.M. DINNER, 5:30 P.M.

MEETING, 6:30 P.M

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A Word from the Prez . . .

John Barcroft, K6AM



First, let me welcome our new newsletter editor, Ron Stockton, N0RR. Ron was previously editor for his club in W0 land. As I write this I have no idea what this Bulletin looks like but I assure you, it looks great!

Thanks to all of you who came out for our annual Christmas party and of course to Wayne, NN6R and his wife Connie for opening their home as hosts for the third time. It was great to see you all as well as some folks from out of town and to meet some of the member's families. Hope you all ended up with the gift of your dreams in the gift exchange. I know Pat, WA6MHZ did. If not, there's always next year.

The planning for Visalia is progressing nicely. The online registration is now available and please don't forget to make your banquet table request via e-mail ASAP. See the IDXC web site for full details. Hopefully, you already have a room and a ride, but if not feel free to use the club reflector to find someone to team up with.

The bands have had a few bursts of interesting DX lately. There have been several very unusual long path openings to the Middle East and Indian Ocean over the South Pole on *10 meters* at about 9 in the morning! It's well past sunset there at that time and except for this path the band seems to be quite dead, even for domestic signals. This is occurring with the solar flux below 120 and absolutely no sign of normal short path to Europe. Go figure.

Finally, on a surprising sad note, as most of you know, we lost one of our most energetic up-and-coming newer members last month. John Graf, WA6L lost his battle with cancer while in the process of some heavy duty treatment including chemo and a bone marrow transplant. We will always remember John for his very positive friendly attitude and willingness to help out and get the job done.

73, John, K6AM

Treasurers Report

Ellen, N6UWW



Secretary/Treasurers Report

San Diego DX Club Meeting Minutes

It seems an eternity since our last meeting (October) and just how in the world did it already get to be 2013? Where DOES time fly?!?

The December 2nd Holiday Party was a huge success thanks to our gracious hosts Wayne NN6R & his wife, Connie. Thanks also go to Dan N6ERD for coordinating things and the *very* entertaining game we all played. Jim W6YA was inducted into our Hall of Fame and nobody went home hungry.

We are all saddened to learn of the passing of John Graf, WA6L, on December 17th. He put up a valiant fight against cancer and will be missed.

Here's looking forward to a healthy and prosperous New Year with lots of good DX for all!

Treasurer's Report

2013 Dues are now being accepted. Individual dues are \$20 and family dues are \$30. Please send checks payable to:

SAN DIEGO DX CLUB
c/o Ellen Utschig
2104 Poplar Rd
Oceanside, CA 92058-2332

Note: There is no PayPal option this year.

Statement Balance 12/31/2012 \$6,197.78

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen, N6UWW

Editor's Ramblings

Ron, N0RR

We have all heard of the "15 minutes of fame" entitlement in our lifetime cliché and probably most of us have experienced it. Two of my minutes were used up when John asked me to take over the club bulletin after seeing my presentation at the November meeting. He said "You really know this stuff..." Although I thought he was commenting on basic propagation theory, I now know he was referring to my ability to assemble a briefing and familiarity with MS PowerPoint. So in that confused moment of glory, I crumbled and said "yes" I would do it, and here I am.

Immediately I figured out that are two fundamental challenges associated with the bulletin: 1) How to make it enjoyable and relevant to a diverse membership; and 2) keeping the file size reasonable to permit emailing. To the first point. I've added two new sections; Hints and Kinks and How's DX? These provide an opportunity for every member to contribute or just see what he/she is missing on the bands.

For future editions I invite anyone to email me their inputs by the 20th of each month. I also encourage testers to provide band stats, scores, etc. for publication. I also want to add a last page dedicated to Items for Sale or Wanted to Buy.

Remember this is your bulletin and I am relying on members to provide content. My job is to assemble and present that content in a logical and coherent manner.

Ron, N0RR

SDDXC Holiday Party in Pictures



SDDXC December 2012



How's DX?

DX worked by SDDXC members

Station	Band	Date	Time	By
5X1NH	30 CW	9-Dec	1458	W6YA
7P8ZM	10 CW	23-Dec	1529	N0RR
A45XR	10 CW (LP)	9-Dec	1543	W6YA
A45XR	30 CW	4-Dec	1432	W6YA
A71EM	10 CW (LP)	7-Jan	1625	W6YA
A92IO	40 CW (LP)	18-Dec	1431	W6YA
D3AA	80 CW	3-Jan	0104	N0RR
H40FN	80 CW	26-Dec	1445	N0RR
J28UC	20 SSB (LP)	19-Dec	1523	W6YA
JD1BMH	80 CW	31-Dec	1404	N0RR
RI1ANF	10 CW	22-Dec	1619	N0RR
RL3A	80 CW	10-Jan	1411	N0RR
SU9VB	20 RTTY	24-Dec	1548	W6YA
SU9VB	40 CW	7-Dec	0446	N0RR
VU2XO	10 SSB (LP)	13-Dec	1614	W6YA
XU1A	80 CW	12-Dec	1351	N0RR
XW4XR	10 CW (LP)	11-Jan	1553	W6YA
YO9HP	80 CW	8-Dec	0606	W6YA
ZL9HR	80 CW	2-Dec	1055	N0RR

QSLs Received Recently

Station	Via
3B9SP	HB9ACA
D2EB	IZ3ETU
E40VB	UA4WHX
EL2WS	N7CW
NH8S	AA4NN
P29VPB	G3KHZ
PW0F	OH2BH
RI1ANF	RK1PWA
T40C	N1KI
T6LG	LZ1ZF
TT8TT	I2YSB
V31NO	W3NO
V73AX	WH0AI
XP2I	OZ1BII
XV4Y	OK1DOT
YJ0AFU	NA5U
Z60K	G3TXF
Z60WW	OH2BH

To kick-off this page, I solicited inputs from several active DXers, but only one replied. For future bulletins please send me your inputs via email, preferably in Excel format, by the 20th of each month. I will consolidate all inputs received.

Contesters, please send me your band/mode statistics and score for any and all contests.

FYI—From personal experience I can tell you that ARRL DXCC accreditation backlog is exactly four weeks including two major holidays.

If you would like a copy of my November propagation presentation, please send me a request at rjstockton@cox.net and I will email a PDF version.

Upcoming DXpeditions

DXCC Entity	Call sign	Time frame
9X, Rwanda	9X0PY	Jan 15 - 31
JD1, Minami Torishima	JG8NQJ/JD1	Jan 15 - mid April
YS, El Salvador	YS3CW	Until Jan 31

Hints and Kinks

RFI from Low Voltage Lighting

Most of us who use the HF bands have experienced RFI problems from solid state power supplies, even in our own houses. One of the most common examples is the router. However, increasingly popular are the low voltage lighting systems which have been appearing in remodels and new construction. They may be single lamps or a bar with four or six lamps. Most often these are powered by a solid state supply, contained in the fixture for convenience. This is a rapidly increasing type of RFI that is a major source of RFI. It's characterized by repeating noise peaks at regular intervals.

Since many states are regulating against the use of incandescent lighting, homeowners are attracted to these devices as a decorative choice, such as the colorful pendants seen in light stores. They are not energy saving devices. These lamps could be powered by a regular magnetic transformer instead of the solid state type that typically radiates noise in the HF bands. Most manufactures offer this option. The non radiating magnetic type is too large to contain within the fixture.

California kitchens must now be designed with 51% or more energy saving lamps, fluorescent or LED. Many opt for the low voltage lighting for the other 49%.

I had a neighbor one block away who installed two bars of six low voltage lamps with a solid state power supply. They were made by George Kovacs Co. I was paralyzed with noise on 40m. The neighbor was not about to go to any expense to replace the transformer. I finally asked an electrician to place a 2 section Corcom EMI filter in the back box of each bank of lights. They barely fit, but eliminated the problem completely.

If you know someone who is contemplating a remodel, ask that they use a magnetic transformer in all low voltage lighting systems.

73, Jim McCook
W6YA

Astron RS-35A Power Supply Alert

Some versions of this popular P/S model have an assembly flaw that can cause arcing and companion smoke. The problem is related to the two screws holding the PC board to the electrolytic filter capacitor terminals. The screws are too long and bottom out in the capacitor threads without providing a firm mechanical, hence electrical, connection to the PC circuit traces. When this poor connection presents a high impedance during full current, arcing can occur.

The simple fix is to add one or two (depending on thickness) flat washers between the screw head and the terminal lugs or just replace the screws with shorter ones. You know that your fix is successful if you get a solid mechanical connection when the screws are tight.

Ron, N0RR

SWAINS ISLAND DXPEDITION

Arnold I. Shatz N6HC

Swains Island (IOTA OC-200) is privately owned by the Jennings family. It is a low-lying coral atoll located about 200 miles northwest of Tutuila, the main island of the American Samoa island group. The reefs have high coral cover with many different types of corals and maintain a low incidence of disease. Near shore waters are home to large schools of predators like barracudas, jacks and snappers. Sharks and large humpback wrasse are frequently seen. Dogtooth tuna are also more common around the island than elsewhere in American Samoa. Swains Island has a rich cultural history and was once the site of an active copra plantation. Its scenic beaches and abundant natural resources make it a potential eco-tourism destination.

One of the mysteries of Swains Island is the presence of an eighteen inch stone idol that sits on top of a four foot stone structure in a clearing. No one knows the origin of the idol although some of the Jennings family members have speculated that in the past, the ocean water flowed into the lagoon through a small channel at high tide. They suggest that the idol may have been a marker to show traveling Polynesians how they could enter the lagoon and seek shelter on their journeys throughout the Pacific.

The last DXpedition to Swains Island was in 2007. In September of 2012, a group of eighteen amateur radio operators reactivated Swains Island under the callsign NH8S. These hams were K9CT – Craig (co-leader), W8GEX – Joe (co-leader), ND2T – Tom, N2TU – Lou, AA4NN – Joe, K5AB – Alan, NA6M – Mark, W6KK – Charlie, N6HC – Arnie (team physician), N6HD – David, W8TN – Clark, W8HC – Hal, K9CS – Carl, WB9Z – Jerry, K9NW – Mike, SM5AQD – Hawk, DL3DXX – Dietmar, and 9V1FJ – Barry. The team DXpedition members' experiences varied from many prior major DXpeditions to no prior major DXpedition experience. A nineteenth member of the group got as close as off shore of Swains Island but he needed to return on the ship to Pago Pago for medical treatment...DJ2VO-Jurgen.

Four members of the team are CDXC members: SM5AQD, 9V1FJ, ND2T and N6HC. Three members of the team are Southern California DX Club members: W6KK, N6HD and N6HC.

No major DXpedition can function successfully without support personnel. Our sterling support team consisted of NV9L – Valerie (North American pilot), MM0NDX – Col (European pilot), John – K6MM (Relay pilot and webmaster extraordinaire); Paul – W8AEF (testing), Paul – W6XA (testing), Tom – N4XP (testing), and John – N7CQQ (testing); Don – N1DG (logistics), Max – I8NHJ (logistics); Markus – DL9RCF (fundraising), Janet – W8CAA (fundraising), and Margaret – XYL of AA4NN (fundraising).

The co-leaders made all the requisite arrangements with Alex Jennings who is the family representative and has the authority to grant access to the island. Sponsors were asked to help fund the expedition by either supplying equipment or donating to the operational account...or both. A team of operators was chosen. All of the electronic equipment and antennas were tested before being staged for shipping from Southern California by Arnie (N6HC). Four heavily laden pallets were sent to the Port of Los Angeles for shipment to Pago Pago. The pallets were then transferred to the MV Lady Naomi and delivered to Swains Island in advance of the arrival of the DXpedition team.

The multinational DXpedition team met in Honolulu, Hawaii on September 1, 2012. We had a lovely dinner at Sam Choy's restaurant with many of the local Hawaiian hams including Kimo-KH7U, Eran-WH6R, Martin-KH6MB, Mark-WH7W and last, but not least, Lee-KH6 Blooming Zipper Flipper.

On September 3, 2012 we boarded a flight to Pago Pago, American Samoa. We spent the night at the Tradewinds Hotel where we had our last comfortable shower and our last air-conditioned night of rest in a comfortable bed. We also hooked up with John – N7CQQ and Ron – N6XT who were staying at the same hotel and were planning a trip to Tokelau for a two man DXpedition.

The following day we departed for Swains Island for a 22 hour cruise on the MV Lady Naomi with her resident roaches and “interesting” aromas. Most of the team made use of a Scopolamine patch to prevent motion sickness. In spite of this precaution, a couple of the team members required ancillary treatment to control their uncomfortable sea sickness symptoms. One of the team members became disoriented, had memory disturbances, dizziness, restlessness and confusion. He wandered the ship alone during the nighttime passage and sustained a deep, extensive lower leg laceration that required multiple sutures to repair. This laceration was complicated by the fact that he was also taking an anti-coagulant for a cardiac condition. The co-leaders and team physician agreed that it would be very prudent to send him back to Pago Pago for further evaluation and treatment. The differential diagnosis of this symptom complex was eventually determined to be a rare adverse reaction to the Scopolamine patch and after several days of hospitalization and diagnostic tests he recovered completely. He rejoined the team when they returned to Pago Pago twelve days later.

Our DXpedition contract called for the food and drink, tents, generators and fuel to be provided by the Jennings family represented by David Jennings on Swains Island. He had a crew of twelve to service our needs during the island stay. A four wheel drive ATV pulling a small wagon was indispensable in transporting equipment and personnel to the SSB and CW tent sites. Our “tent city” was on the west side of the island and our operating tents were on the north side of the island. We spent the better part of two days erecting our antennas and setting up the stations in 100 degree plus heat. Generally, the weather during our stay was “hot, hot, hot” with occasional passing tropical squalls which provided us with fresh water that could be used for washing dishes or clothes and for showering. There were two antenna fields positioned well away from each other. We never experienced interference between the CW and SSB/RTTY sites. For 10, 12, 15, 17 and 20 meters we used SVDA two element arrays. On six meters we had a five element InnovAntenna yagi. For 30, 40, 80 and 160 meters we used vertical arrays. The SSB site had a four square 40 meter array but the CW four square was problematic and we just used one element as a simple vertical. The beach was quite narrow and primarily made of crushed coral with little sand; secure guying became an issue at high tide. Late in the expedition, we lost the 80 meter vertical due to a guying issue at high tide and we lost the 160 meter Titanex vertical due to a high tide issue and the control box at the base of the antenna.

The transceivers were provided by Icom...IC-7600. We had five KPA500 amplifiers by Elecraft and two PW-1 amplifiers by Icom. There was a phase noise issue associated with the radios which we worked around by adjusting our operating bands. The amplifiers performed flawlessly. Our generators were the Home Depot Generac 5000 model and we had two at each operating site. A maintenance engineer provided by the Jennings family serviced and filled the generators, as needed, and we never had a power challenge during the entire operation. Our logging program was N1MM.

Our operating schedule was simple. Three teams of six individuals each – three for the CW tent and three for the SSB/RTTY tent each shift. What wasn't simple was the rotation of three hours on the radio and six hours off.... around the clock. I think that almost everyone felt sleep deprived by the end of the trip.

We had three cooks to prepare our meals. For breakfast we might have eggs, bacon, oatmeal or pancakes with juice or coffee. For lunch we free lanced with snacks. Dinner varied from pasta, ribs

or sea food including fresh sashimi, crab, lobster or fish. There was plenty of bottled water, Gatorade, soda, coffee, tea, cocoa and beer. No one went hungry on this trip and no one lost any weight!

Hygiene was a challenge. Our shower consisted of a tent housing a fifty gallon drum filled with rain water at ambient temperature. A moderate sized tureen floated in the drum. You simply filled the tureen with water, poured some water over your body, used your bar soap and then poured some more water over your body to wash away the soap. This set-up trumped an ocean bath where bar soap is useless.

We had a two drop water closet that was flushed with sea water. It was a challenge to keep the toilets from backing up. But at least we didn't need to dig an 8 foot long drop capped by a toilet seat.

Medical issues that came to my attention ranged from anorexia, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, "stuffy" ears, sun burn, rashes, sole of the foot blisters in a diabetic with peripheral neuropathy, mosquito and spider bites. Unfortunately, one of the bites became infected with MRSA, and when my patient returned home, he required hospitalization and IV antibiotics and incision and drainage of an abscess. Several of the islanders made use of my services and medical kit supplies. This was a very geriatric crew with the youngest member being 49 years old and the eldest, 79 years of age.

We had both Inmarsat and BGAN satellite access on Swains Island. This facilitated communication to friends and relatives as well as allowing us to upload our log data on a daily basis.

A summary of our statistics show that over nine days of operation, we totaled 105,455 QSOs, with 54,128 on CW, 43,126 on SSB and 8,201 on RTTY. Continental breakdown revealed 41% North America, 28% Europe, and 27% Asia. Please see our web site at www.nh8s.org for a further breakdown of the statistics and to view our photo module.

The trip back to Pago Pago was quite similar to our previous passage to Swains Island. We were all looking forward to getting back to the Tradewinds Hotel to get a long, warm shower and a rest on a firm mattress in an air-conditioned room. Alex Jennings gave us a tour of Pago Pago the following day and then hosted the entire team at his home for dinner. After the meal, we were transported to the airport where we boarded a Hawaiian Airlines 737 for our return to Honolulu. The team members said our goodbyes in the Honolulu airport and we went our separate ways.

Friendships were made on this trip that will undoubtedly last a lifetime. Mutual respect for one another was religiously practiced. We supported each other in and out of the radio tents. We laughed together and we worked hard together under conditions that can only be described as "basic." We had great leadership throughout the DXpedition.

I would like to thank all the sponsors and donors for their generosity. Without that support, this DXpedition would not have happened.

I hope that you were able to make it into the log. It wasn't for lack of trying on our part if you were not fortunate enough to contact us. Our QSL manager is AA4NN. Please check the web site for QSL card options.

Arnold I. Shatz N6HC

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